U.S. Paid $10,000 for Clemente Sewer, Water

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By Gaylord Shaw
Associated Press

The federal government paid nearly $10,000 of the cost of installing water and sewer lines at President Nixon's San Clemente estate soon after he purchased the property in 1969, officials said yesterday.

Most of the expense, $6,260, was for a six-inch water line installed at the Secret Service's request for fire protection, a General Services Administration spokesman said in response to inquiries.

Sources reported the water line also serves a swimming pool that Mr. Nixon built at his expense near his oceanside California residence in July, 1969.

The government also paid $3,200 of the total $9,784 cost of installing a six-inch sewer line serving the Spanish-style home, GSA spokesman Terry Angelo said. Angelo said the sewer was built larger than normally would be necessary "to accommodate the federal personnel stationed there at all times," and the government thus shared the cost.

The nearly $10,000 in expenditures is in addition to the $100,000 in government funds which the Associated Press reported two weeks ago had been spent for improvements on Mr. Nixon's property to improve presidential security.

It also is in addition to $76,000 which Newsday, a Long Island newspaper, reported in its Sunday editions had been spent for estate landscaping at the request of the Secret Service. The White House said the landscaping was done to areas used for Secret Service installations, the Long Island newspaper said.

Newsday said the $76,000 figure was disclosed during an interview with Arthur F. Sampson, GSA acting administrator, and with a Secret Service official.

The sewer and water lines were built in the summer of 1969 as part of "Operation Sunrise," the code name for the crash federal program undertaken to prepare Mr. Nixon's house and grounds for occupancy by the First Family.

The GSA first refused to answer questions about the lines. Later, after the same questions were asked of White House officials, Angelo acknowledged that the government had paid for part of the work.

As to the water line, Angelo said, "The U.S. government paid for that entirely at the request of the Secret Service. It was installed for a fire hydrant and water stand for fire fighting."

Angelo said the government paid about one-third of the cost of the sewes line to "supplement the sewer capacity above what would be necessary for presidential use, to accommodate federal personnel stationed there at all times."

Other officials said the Secret Service had requested expansion of the sewer system.

Records in the San Clemente City Hall do not indicate that building permits were obtained for the work, although a map in the file shows the route of the line stretching 270 feet from the edge of the President's property to the vicinity of his house.

A Secret Service spokesman said the agency was not concerned that the President's swimming pool was linked to the six-inch water main it requested. "Our only interest is that it be efficient for fire protection," the spokesman said of the water line.

The fire hydrant link to the line was used in 1970 when a faulty fireplace caused a blaze which damaged the interior of the President's house.